**BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1935**

**Legislative Council, 30 October 1935, pages 1262-3**

Second reading

Having obtained leave, the Minister of Agriculture introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Bush Fires Act. Read a first time.

The Hon. A. P. BLESING (Northern Minister of Agriculture)—

This bill is introduced for the purpose of making two amendments to the Bush Fires Act, 1933. Clause 2 Ideals with the duties of district councils to make adequate provision for the prevention of bush fires in their areas. Section 28 of the Bush Fires Act, 1933, provides that a council may expend its rates in the provision of firefighting appliances within its area, but the section places no obligation on councils to take these measures. Clause 2 provides that, in certain cases, a council must take these precautions. The clause is limited to district councils and it is provided that before it applies to any District or part thereof the Governor, by proclamation, shall declare that it is to apply to that district or part. In certain parts of the State it is extremely desirable that a council should provide appliances for the prevention of bush fires. The clause will not apply generally to all councils, but only to the areas in which the Government is of opinion these precautions should be taken. I n considering what fire-fighting appliances are adequate for the needs in the area, the council may, under subclause | (3), take into account any fire-fighting appliances provided by other than the council. If a council to which the clause applies neglects to provide fire-fighting appliances, the Minister may call upon the council to fulfil its obligations under the clause. If the council fails to comply with any notice given by the Minister within one month of the giving of the notice, it will be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50. This provision is similar to provisions relating to destruction of vermin and noxious weeds where failure by a council to enforce the law renders the council liable to penalties.

Clause 2 carries into effect the resolution recently passed by the Legislative Council on the motion of the Hon. H. D. Young, and will secure that, in districts where protection is necessary, the councils concerned will be obliged to furnish protection against the spread of bush fires.

Clause 3 deals with the appointment of fire control officers. Under section 29 of the principal Act a council may appoint not more than 15 fire control officers within its area, and may, in addition, appoint not more than 15 additional officers who are fire control officers in any adjoining local government area. It has been submitted to the Government that this number of fire control officers is insufficient in cases where a new council has been created by the amalgamation of three or four councils under the Local Government Areas (Re-arrangement) Act, 1929. Clause 3 therefore pro­vides that, in any case thought fit by the Minister, he may authorise the appointment of an additional number of fire control officers not exceeding 15. That will give power to increase the number from 15. to 30. There are certain areas where four councils have been merged into one. Under the clause it will be competent for the Minister to consider the requirements of any particular Council, and if he thinks the council, by reason of the size of its area or any other cause, requires more fire control officers than is permitted by the existing section, he may authorise additional appointments to any number up to 15. I: move the second reading.

The Hon. H. D. YOUNG secured the adjournment of the debate.